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The Secret History of Japanese Cinema: The Yakuza movies

Federico Varese

This article explores the interplay among economic imperatives within the entertainment business, the mafia's role in the creation of its own media image, and the production of gangster films. Taking Japan as a case study, the paper shows that, when given the chance to influence the content of gangster movies, crime bosses have portrayed themselves as benevolent patriarchs and a positive force in society, rather the anti-heroes of classic American gangster movies. In Japan, such a choice had, however, the unintended consequence of a decline in audience interest and eventually led to the demise of studio yakuza movies. Ultimately, the paper shows that the mafia control over art can lead to the death of art—something that is bad for the mafia as well.

Keywords organised crime; Japan; cinema; representations

Introduction

On the night of January 31, 1985, 1,000 members of the Tokyo-based Inagawa-kai, the second-largest Japanese crime syndicate, attended a party in the town of Atami, in Shizuoka Prefecture. They were celebrating the release of a movie based on the life of the syndicate's boss. The two lead actors, later interviewed by police, were duly present at the party. When questioned about his link to the Inagawa-kai boss, one actor described the relationship as "that of a star and a fan".¹ The movie, *A Band of Daredevils* (directed by Yamashita Kōsaku) was released by Tōei, a respected studio that had been at the forefront of the yakuza

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1. *Asahi News Service* 30 December 1986. The actor in question is Tsuruta Koji.

movie genre since its foundation in the early 1950s.² By 1994, it had produced some 252 such titles.³

Paul Schrader, the author of *Taxi Driver*, knew a thing or two about urban stories and gangster movies when he penned a now classic essay on Japanese gangster films for the New York magazine *Film Comment* in 1974.⁴ With his brother, who had just come back from Japan, Schrader had been working on the script *The Yakuza* (which became a film directed by Sidney Pollack in 1975).⁵ Schrader saw the Japanese gangster films as “probably the most restricted genre yet devised”, composed of “litanies of private argot, subtle body language, obscure codes, elaborate rites, iconographic costumes and tattoos”. Such movies, he maintained, differ dramatically from their American or European counterparts, as they reflect neither the dilemma of social mobility seen in gangster films of the 1930s nor the despair of post-war *film noir*. Yakuza films are instead organised around the conflict between social obligation (*giri*) and personal inclination (*ninjō*). This dialectic, which the good-natured protagonist embodies, drives the standard plot where good and evil, individual inclination and group obligations are clearly distinguishable. Inevitably, the film climaxes in the final sword- or gunfight and the bad guys are defeated.⁶

More than 30 years after Schrader’s observations, the 2005 Venice Film Festival showcased 36 films in this genre, released between 1926 and 1978. Spanning several centuries of Japanese history, the selected films trace the local Mafiosi back to their somewhat mythical origins as master-less samurai and chronicle their progression from wandering blind swordsmen (the Zatoichi sub-genre) to unlucky gamblers to post-war gangsters.⁷ The Venetian retrospective provides an opportunity to revisit Schrader’s take on the yakuza film genre. Furthermore, it allows us to address an important question that lies at the juncture of film analysis and the study of organised crime: what is the relationship between the themes and the style of films and the real gangsters?

Most studies focus only on one side of this question by examining the popular media portrayal of gangsters. David Ruth, for instance, concludes that American

2. On Tōei, see Desjardins, C. (2005) *Outlaw Masters of Japanese Film*, I.B Tauris, London, pp. 227–228; Schilling, M. (1999) *Contemporary Japanese Film*, Weatherhill, New York and Tokyo, pp. 27–30.

3. Kaplan, D & Dubro, A. (2003) *Yakuza. Japan’s Criminal Underworld. 2nd edition*, Robert Hale, London, p 141.

4. Schrader, P. (1974) ‘Yakuza-Eiga: A Primer’, *Film Comment*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 8–17.

5. Biskind, P. (1998) *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls*, Bloomsbury, London, pp. 290–91. See also Lennon, E. (2005) ‘A Question of Authorship: The Yakuza’. Available at: <http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/05/37/yakuza.html>.

6. Schrader 1974. See also Iwai McDonald, K. (1992) ‘The Yakuza Film. An Introduction’ in *Reframing Japanese Cinema. Authorship, Genre, History*, eds. A. Nolletti Jr & D. Desser, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, p. 167.

7. See Biennale di Venezia (2005) *62^o Mostra Internazionale d’Arte Cinematografica. Official Catalogue*, Mondadori-Electa, Milan, pp. 242–245.

media in the 1920s and 1930s invented the 'legend' of the modern gangster in order to give voice to urban anxieties, fostering in the process a moral panic in the public.⁸ Scholars often point out that real gangsters differed dramatically from their media image: "The medium makes the legend—writes, for instance, John Dean—and sometimes the medium gets it wrong".⁹ Important as they are, these studies consider the gangster as an object rather than an active subject. On the contrary, Diego Gambetta has offered a series of interconnected observations on the Sicilian mafia and popular culture that brings to the fore the role of criminals. His starting point is that violence is a key resource for a mafia group (albeit costly to produce), as such a group's core activity is to offer criminal protection. Only those who can command violent resources sufficient to discourage competitors—and to convince lesser criminals and clients to accept their protection—can successfully operate a protection "firm". Furthermore, violence has a property that other commodities lack: a reputation for effective violence allows the "producers" to save on the actual display (production) of the good itself. Mafiosi therefore look for all possible ways to enhance their reputation for violence. Since they cannot openly advertise the quality of their services, as the mafia is an illegal enterprise, they rely on a "brand name": the collective reputation of the mafia itself. They guard the value of the brand, as it directly helps them reduce the production of violence when they have to force reluctant victims to pay up.¹⁰ (They also engage in individual displays of violence to impress fellow Mafiosi and local clients.)

It is at this point in Gambetta's argument that the study of organised crime intercepts the study of popular culture. Movies serve as a primary (although unintended) vehicle: they can enhance the reputation of the real mafia. Veteran film critic Tullio Kezich reports a conversation he had with a film production manager when he was involved in the shooting of *Salvatore Giuliano* (dir. Rosi, 1961). The producer, he recalls, "explained to me that organised crime does not mind movies about the mafia; on the contrary it considers them with a dose of pride, as something that can shed an appealing light [on them], especially if a boss is played by a popular actor".¹¹ Similarly, Japanese director Fukasaku Kinji said: "they [the yakuza] liked those movies because it made them look good. It was good for their image".¹² As Special Agent Joseph D. Pistone was on his way to give another testimony against the Bonanno crime "family" in New York, a defendant who knew that a Hollywood movie was in the making (*Donnie Brasco* 1997) asked: "Hey Donnie, who is going to play me in the movie?"¹³ The mafia has gone a step

8. Ruth, D. (1996) *Inventing the Public Enemy: the Gangster in American Culture, 1918-1934*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London.

9. Dean, J. (2001) 'Introduction', in *Le Crime organisé, à la ville et à l'écran (Etats-Unis, 1929-1951)*, eds. S. Body-Gendrot, F. Bordat & D. Frau-Meigs, Armand Colin, Paris, p. 9.

10. Gambetta, D. (1993) *The Sicilian Mafia. The Business of Private Protection*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

11. *Corriere della Sera*, 1 July 1998.

12. Desjardins 2005, p. 25.

13. Pistone, P. (2004) *The Way of the Wiseguy*, Running Press, Philadelphia and London, p. 146.

further, providing a fascinating example of the circular borrowing of symbols. Real Mafiosi, Gambetta shows, borrow mannerisms and lines from movies (and from popular culture in general) in order to better intimidate their victims. The Mafioso invokes fiction to make people believe he is real.¹⁴

This process is not exclusive to mafias or the modern age. In medieval Europe, aristocrats emulated the actions they had read about in literature. As pointed out by Joan Haahr, “the so-called rules of chivalry [...] were largely self-conscious borrowings from the fictional world of romance. Real knights [...] delighted in assuming the arms and the identities of their Arthurian heroes at festivals known as the Round Table”.¹⁵ When an institution capable of certifying identities in an unambiguous manner does not exist, imitating art is the surest route to convincing a sceptical audience.

Gambetta’s perspective is focused on the unintended actions of the film industry: the film industry does not actively promote the mafia’s corporate image. It just uses good stories from the underworld to make a profit at the box office. The argument advanced by Gambetta also suggests that the mafia rationally seeks an association with elements of popular culture that help promote its image. The case study discussed in this article focuses on a further, as yet unexplored question: how would the mafia portray itself if it had the choice? If it were to behave rationally and had control over its own image, the mafia would promote depictions of itself that would resonate with the public and foster its menacing image. Still, plots may differ dramatically. An avenue would be to embrace the anti-hero of classic gangster films. As suggested by Schrader and others after him, the gangster is depicted in movies such as *Little Caesar* and *Scarface* as attempting to move upward socially: “the typical gangster film presents a steady upward progress followed by a very precipitate fall”.¹⁶ In such stories of one man’s career, the morally impure hero struggles with unsympathetic institutions and is ultimately crushed by a petty and vindictive social order. How would a real life boss like such a depiction of his own world? Arguably, if the cinematic gangster were crushed with the entire criminal organisation, the message would end up being self-defeating for real life mobsters. If, on the other hand, the organisation that crushes the anti-hero were the mafia itself, bosses would come across as evil. Alternatively, mafia bosses could refrain from encouraging filmmakers to embrace classic gangster plots and opt instead for stories that portray their film equivalents as benevolent patriarchs and their organisation as ultimately doing a public service.

Drawing upon the available evidence, this paper suggests that Japanese organised crime, the yakuza, had a direct say in the production of studio movies about itself. The paper also argues that plots of yakuza movies follow the latter plot model discussed above, namely they tend to portray bosses as benevolent

14. Gambetta 1993.

15. *New York Times* 18 November 2002.

16. Warshow, R. (2002) *The Immediate Experience: Movies, Comics, Theatre, and Other Aspects of Popular Culture*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass, p. 132.

patriarchs and the organisation as a positive force in society. Such a choice of themes had, however, an unintended consequence, as it led to a decline in audience interest and eventually to the end of this production line. Virtually no studio yakuza movies were released in theatres in the 1990s. The best form of mafia advertising, this paper concludes, is indirect. Significantly, a brief period of transition in the studio system in the late 1960s and early 1970s allowed some directors, such as Satō Junya and Fukasaku Kinji, to produce a small number of cinematic masterpieces that embrace some elements of the classic gangster movie genre and resemble the work of some of their American contemporaries, in particular Martin Scorsese. If left free, I argue, yakuza movies would have evolved in a manner very much like that of American gangster movies. Rather than culture, it was the structure of the Japanese entertainment industry, and in particular the proximity of real gangsters to the studios, that led to such a different stylistic outcome. This article explores the interplay among economic imperatives within the entertainment business, the mafia's role in the creation of its own media image, and the production of yakuza films. Ultimately, it seeks to show that mafia control over art can lead to the death of art—something that is bad for the mafias as well.

Evolution of the Yakuza Movies Genre

As Japan emerged from World War II, four studios that had operated in the pre-war period—Tōhō, Daiei, Shintōhō and Shōchiku—regained control of the industry. In 1953, sensing the existence of a gap in the market, Ōkawa Hiroshi, a railroad and truck transportation magnate, founded Tōei with a purely commercial agenda oriented towards making “conventional period film”.¹⁷ Such movies were either set in the Edo period (1600-1868) or in the more recent past (1890-1930). They portrayed one-dimensional good samurai-yakuza torn between obeying the criminal code of conduct and helping ordinary people harassed by authorities and other criminals.¹⁸ Plots reinforced the virtue of absolute duty towards one's gang, and, more generally, towards the yakuza code. They showed the gangster as a compassionate human being: whenever he does evil, he is doing so because corrupt yakuza take advantage of his devotion to the code. Ultimately, the good yakuza kills the bad ones and re-establishes the honour of the organisation.¹⁹

17. Anderson, J. & Richie, D. (1982) *The Japanese Film: Art and Industry. Expanded Edition*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, p. 239.

18. Desjardins 2005, pp. 227-228 and Anderson and Richie 1982, pp. 453 and 244.

19. A positive image of the yakuza continued in films released in the 1960s. For instance, in *Bloody Festival at Kanda* (1966), a benevolent boss says: “We give the public the shady side of the street in the summer and the sunny side in the winter” (quoted in Iwai McDonald 1992, pp.179-80). In a case of circular borrowing, a yakuza boss is on record with Kaplan and Dubro (p. 18) as saying: “In the winter we give the sunny half of the street to common people because we survive on their work. In the summer we yakuza walk on the sunny side, to give them the cool, shaded half.”

In 1961, Shintōhō studios went bankrupt, opening up a significant portion of the market for its competitors (Daiei would go out of business ten years later).²⁰ In order to acquire shares of the market, Tōei decided to increase production exponentially by introducing triple features that allowed theatre managers to offer a chance of billing every week. Such a decision led Tōei to form a new company (New Tōei) and give its assistant directors a chance to make their own movies.²¹

The young assistant directors working at Tōei had grown up in violence-riddled post-war Japan, where anti-American feelings were pervasive.²² Two of the filmmakers that were to change the genre forever, Satō Junya and Fukasaku Kinji, had direct experience with the vast underground black market that supported Japan's economy and had seen the related gang conflict. They had also witnessed—and at times taken part in—student demonstrations, such as the massive protests against the renegotiation of the US Security Treaty with Japan in 1959.²³ Documentary filmmakers had captured on video this social unrest.²⁴ What is most astonishing for today's viewer is how much this Japanese "new wave" resembled, and in many ways anticipated, its American counterpart—particularly in regard to the style of directors coming of age in the 1960s and 1970s, such as John Boorman, Robert Altman, Warren Beatty, and, above all, Martin Scorsese.

Satō Junya had just graduated with a degree in French literature from the prestigious Tokyo University when he was offered a job at Tōei in 1956. As part of the studio system, he had to work in rotation with different directors until he got the chance to direct his first feature film, *Story of Military Cruelty* (1963). Under pressure to mass-produce movies, Tōei allowed Satō to explore the senseless militarism that brought the country to war. Satō's movie looked at the horrors experienced by military recruits during training. The film poster, which shocked the nation, showed a close-up of a suicidal recruit with a large bayonet in his throat.²⁵ By 1967, Satō had turned his attention to the yakuza genre and injected it with a dose of realism. Set in post-war Japan, Satō's yakuza films portrayed bosses as manipulative and greedy, often consorting with right-wing politicians

20. Anderson and Richie pp. 454-6.

21. McDonald, K. (1983) 'Kinji Fukasaku: an Introduction,' *Film Criticism*, vol. 8, no. 1, p. 21.

22. Macias, P. (2001) *Tokioscope. The Japanese Cult Film Companion*, Cadence Books, San Francisco, p. 153.

23. Desjardins, p. 83. The treaty had been signed in 1951 and had to be renegotiated after Japan regained sovereignty in 1952. In May 1959, a wide-ranging progressive coalition had formed to change the treaty terms. Both right-wing groups and yakuza organized rallies to respond to the large public demonstrations against the government policy. The treaty was eventually ratified by Parliament in June 1960, but it led to the resignation of the Prime Minister. See Sims, R. (2001) *Japanese political History since the Meiji Renovation 1868-2000*, Palgrave, New York, pp. 281-86; Kaplan & Dubro pp. 67-71.

24. Most notably, Ogawa Shinsuke filmed between 1968 and 1973 the protests of rural villagers and farmers around Sanrizuka against the construction of Narita International Airport. Joaquin da Silva, 'Fukasaku y Scorsese: Yakuza y Gángsteres' (2003) @ <http://es.geocities.com/eiga9/articulos/fukasakuyscorsese.html>. See the following titles by Ogawa: *Summer in Narita*, *Peasants of the Second Fortress*, and *Heta Village*.

25. Desjardins p. 75.

(*Organised Crime 1* and *Organised Crime 2*, both 1967). His third feature, *Organised Crime 3: Loyalty Offering Brothers* (1969), follows a war veteran (played by Sugawara Bunta) who becomes a lower-ranking yakuza. The movie opens with Sugawara defending a Japanese woman from American soldiers who try to rape her, and he later marries her. Despite his initial good deed, Sugawara is no better than the Americans: he joins other yakuza and sets up prostitution rings, stealing young women from U.S.-run brothels. Sugawara teams up with a greedy sociopath (played by Andō Noboru) with whom he starts to run a protection racket. Their gang even sets up a torture chamber for “debt collection” from reluctant businessmen. At the film’s end, the outrageous behaviour of both characters leads to a gang war.²⁶ As in American gangster movies, the hero is selfish and morally impure and, ultimately, a sick loner.²⁷

Fukasaku Kinji revolutionized the genre by introducing a new style as well as new themes. Fukasaku had been a studio director for Tōei since 1961. In one year alone he made five movies, mostly short programmes designed to fill out the second half of Tōei triple bills.²⁸ One of his first movies (*The Proud Challenge*, 1962) had a clear political message: a reporter uncovers evidence that a Japanese company is exporting weapons to Southeast Asia with the complicity of the CIA. The final scene suggests that the entire fabric of Japanese democracy is controlled by American interests aimed at crushing the socialist left (Tōei conservative managers seriously objected to the wider implication of the movie and put Fukasaku on probation for six months).²⁹ Fukasaku’s turn to gangster movies was a product of the Tōei studio’s internal organisational structure: the Kyoto branch specialized in period samurai drama, while the Tokyo branch—where he was based—concentrated on yakuza flicks.³⁰ Still, Fukasaku wanted to make yakuza movies that “had a sense of reality”, to move the setting to ruined contemporary cities and slums, and to film tales based on the lives of real mobsters.³¹ It was only in 1972 that Fukasaku was given almost total control over his projects.³² A few years later, he had directed two masterpieces, *Street Mobster* (1972) and *Battle Without Honour and Humanity* (1973).

In Fukasaku’s movies, the yakuza is indistinguishable from any other institution of authority, its members greedy and ruthless in their pursuit of power. In his films, the clear-cut struggle between good and evil liquefies.³³ The protagonist of *Street Mobster*, Okita Isamu, is a loser, born on the day Japan surrendered to the Allied Forces, who refuses to pay a cut to the local boss and is eventually killed. He is, however, far from the honourable man: he is instead

26. See Desjardins p. 76.

27. See Jameson, F. (1992) *Signatures of the Visible*, Routledge, New York, p. 31.

28. Desjardins p. 5. On the impact of the “doublebill” feature of the movie market, see Anderson & Richie, pp. 239-256.

29. McDonald, p. 23; Desjardins p. 21.

30. Desjardins p. 16.

31. Macias, p. 153.

32. Desjardins, p. 8.

33. Iwai McDonald p. 184.

a dedicated materialist who starts off by raping and selling to brothels young women who have just arrived in town. As he ascends in the criminal world, he strikes up a relationship with one of the women he sold into prostitution, but he is constantly beaten down by the established gang. Although the boss mildly sympathises with Okita's youthful brashness, he eventually makes sure that Okita and his woman are killed, in a masterfully shot final scene. Okita's upward move within the criminal world is blocked by the yakuza hierarchy, which is openly symbolic of the greedy new order founded upon American political and social values.

Fukasaku's *Battle Without Honour and Humanity* opens with the atomic bomb blast, and the gangsters practically appear right out of the dust and smoke of the mushroom cloud.³⁴ The lead character, Shōzō (Sugawara Bunta), tries to make ends meet in the post-war Hiroshima black market and eventually joins a yakuza group led by Kaneko, a greedy and treacherous boss, and an honourable young captain named Sakai (Matsukata Hiroki). By the end, Shōzō realizes that even the young Sakai is being corrupted by power, but he refuses to kill him. The boss sees to that, catching Sakai while he is shopping for a doll for his adopted daughter. Shōzō goes to the funeral, and the attending bosses panic as he pulls a gun. Instead of killing Kaneko, Shōzō shoots up the funeral altar (where the hypocritical bosses have paid tributes) and leaves, turning his back on the entire yakuza. As in *Street Mobster*, the criminal hierarchy is corrupt and ultimately responsible for the death of honourable people. The protagonist is a lone hero.

In a major departure from traditional films in this genre, Fukasaku's two movies are based on real-life events. *Battle Without Honour and Humanity* draws on interviews with an imprisoned yakuza boss recounting the genesis of several post-war Hiroshima "families", while *Street Mobster* is loosely based on the life of a real gangster from Fukasaku's home district of Mito, Ishikawa Rikuo.³⁵ The films make extensive use of hand-held cameras, jump cutting, freeze frames and fake documentary evidence. They show old photos, birth certificates, and police documents. Dates and names are introduced onscreen, while climatic moments are shown as stills. Fukasaku said that his style had been influenced by the newsreels shown in cinemas at the end of the 1960s depicting worker and student protests. "That's when I was inspired to begin using the hand-held camera," he explained. "I believe I first came to use it on [*Street Mobster*]. I myself took the camera in hand and ran into the crowds of actors and extras."³⁶

The similarities between Scorsese and Fukasaku are striking. Like Fukasaku, Scorsese grew up in a place and time when violence was pervasive: "Every day I grew up in the Lower East Side somebody had a gun. [...] You could feel

34. Desjardins p. 21.

35. Desjardins pp. 16, 19. *Graveyard of Honour* (1975) is more directly about Ishikawa Rikuo.

36. Macias, p. 154. Da Silva (2003) points out that Fukasaku had used a hand-held camera already in *Under the Fluttering Military Flag* (1972).

palpable tension, always on the verge of violence”.³⁷ Encouraged by his mentor in film school, Scorsese wanted to make slice-of-life movies that drew on real-life stories.³⁸ “*Mean Streets* [1973] was an attempt to put myself and my old friends on the screen, to show how we lived, what life was in Little Italy. It was really an anthropological or a sociological tract”, Scorsese has recalled.³⁹ In *Mean Streets*, he uses fake homemade movie footage, and characters are introduced with their name printed onscreen, as they are in Fukasaku’s films. Jagged editing, jump cutting, hand-held cameras, and mock documentary style were, of course, common in the 1970s, as the French New Wave and the *cinéma vérité* movement of the previous decade had used them extensively. Surely, the Japanese directors of the 1960s, in particular Imamura Shōhei and Ōshima Nagisa, also influenced Fukasaku. What remains significant is that, at about the same time, two filmmakers working in very different contexts decided to adopt similar techniques to make gangster movies—one directing at a time when the (Japanese) studio system was in a structural transition and allowed experimentation and the other working as an independent filmmaker.

Parody plays a larger part in the works of Fukasaku than it does in Satō or Scorsese’s gangster movies, and it is an element often overlooked by critics. This is most evident in *Battle Without Honour and Humanity*: when the protagonist, Shōzō, wants to cut his finger and offer it to the boss, neither he nor anybody else around him knows the proper ceremony. Eventually the boss’ wife comes to the rescue, putting down a mat and offering a knife. The ceremony is nevertheless a farce, ending in the finger itself rolling in the garden and being picked by chickens. In an earlier scene, Shōzō is ready to face the sword-weaving yakuza who has chopped off the arms of one of his associates. Shōzō simply pulls a gun that, after a few misfires, kills the mobster. The traditional use of swords is mocked twice: first, the yakuza brandishing the sword is drunk, and, second, a gunshot puts an end to the samurai rhetoric of the yakuza. These scenes, as well as another in which a clumsy sidekick almost hurts himself in an attempt to hide the sword in his pants, do a lot to ridicule the almost religious respect surrounding the yakuza, its rituals, and its ceremonial paraphernalia.

Fukasaku shook up Japanese cinema in other ways, as well. In an interview, he claimed that his “contribution to the development of Japanese cinema was to abolish the star system”.⁴⁰ It might be more accurate to say that, as Scorsese did with Robert De Niro, Fukasaku and Satō contributed to the creation of a new star by introducing the public to Sugawara Bunta, one of the greatest actors in Japanese cinema. Bunta had worked at Tōhō studio branch, Shin Tōhō, in the 1950s.⁴¹

37. Biskind pp. 228 and 227.

38. Scorsese’s mentor at NYU was Haig Manoogian (Biskind, p. 227). Scorsese and the co-writer of *Mean Streets*, Mardik Martin, “had contempt for Puzo’s *The Godfather*, then a bestseller, which Scorsese knew bore no relation to the truth” (Biskind, p. 229). *Goodfellas* (1990) and *Casino* (1995) are both based on reportages by Nick Pileggi.

39. Thompson, D. & Christie, I (eds) (1989) *Scorsese on Scorsese*, Faber and Faber, London, p. 48.

40. McDonald, p. 24.

41. His debut was in the 1956 Tōhō film *In the Town of Pathos, the Fog Falls* (Macias, pp. 112-113).

After the studio went bankrupt in 1961, he had to start again from scratch, playing small roles for various studios. The Hiroshima-dialect speaking actor was under contract with Tōei when he was given the lead role in Satō's *Organised Crime: Loyalty Offering Brothers* and, later, in Fukasaku's *Street Mobster* and *Battle without Honour and Humanity*.

In an interview granted in 1997, Satō looks back at the late 1960s and early 1970s and claims that the yakuza movies spoke to a wide audience:

"As the 1960s progressed, there were more and more students' demonstrations. Many young people thought that the yakuza film characters were almost like student leaders, fighting the system against impossible odds. They took them quite seriously—both students on the left *and* the right. And they felt deep empathy for the characters when they would die at the end. There was the aesthetic, too, that saw a terrible beauty in dying this way. In these films, the only way left to make a change in the system is through violence. But the majority of the audience for yakuza films were blue-collar workers who felt virtually at war with the faceless, white-collar, corporate bosses. No one felt they had a system they could depend on. Everyone identified with the individual hero or anti-hero going up against the system."⁴²

Such views might seem disingenuous: the connection between right-wing conspirators and the yakuza were well known at the time, and Satō himself had denounced them in the 1967 film *Organised Crime*.⁴³ The director is, however, acknowledging something different: it is not the yakuza as such, but rather its portrayal in the new yakuza movies that struck a chord with both students and workers alike. As the viewer of *Mean Streets* can empathise with the tribulations of Harvey Keitel, a collector for the mafia, so could the Japanese audience of the 1960s relate to the emotional dilemmas and frustrations of low-lives who stole, raped, and murdered. In their own ways, the products of the Japanese cinematic new wave of the 1960s and 1970s did express feelings of frustration with mainstream society, in particular with American-style capitalist order, that echoed themes present in American gangster movies.

The Involution of the Yakuza Film Genre

Almost right at the time when Satō and Fukasaku had introduced new themes and a new style into a moribund genre, other themes were emerging in their works that would come to overshadow the original injection of realism and radical criticism. A subtle change of direction can be observed in a film Satō directed two years after, *Organised Crime 3: Loyalty Offering Brothers, Violent Gang Rearms* (1971). In one of the film's last scenes, dockworkers throw stones at the protagonist, a yakuza underboss, who has been trying to protect the workers against the villainous head bosses. Shortly afterwards, the yakuza underboss

42. Desjardins p. 82. Fukasaku expressed similar views. See Desjardins pp. 24-25.

43. Kaplan & Dubro p. 43.

commits *hara-kiri*. The protagonist is a lone wolf who, despite his best efforts, is not rewarded by the people he champions and dies at the end. Traces of the critical edge to be found in Satō's earlier movies remain: championing the weak requires breaking the yakuza code, while for so many earlier yakuza movies championing the weak and crushing the strong was a feature of the yakuza code.⁴⁴ However, Satō reintroduces the *giro-ninjō* dialectic, opting to depict the low-level yakuza as a tragic hero torn between obeying greedy bosses and championing the weak. He chooses to champion the weak—who do not appreciate his sacrifice—but, by doing so, he breaks the yakuza code, and can ultimately only kill himself. The yakuza member is now a positive hero, an honourable man with a deeply felt code of honour that stems from the true values of the yakuza—values that are, at times, betrayed by bosses.

Fukasaku's films also experienced a change of direction. *Graveyard of Honour* (1975) combines elements of radical criticism and daring style with a more positive attitude towards the yakuza. The film is a "mockumentary" about a social misfit, the real-life drug addict and maverick criminal Ishikawa Rikuo. The film manages to find the right balance of poetic compassion and objectivity as it casts a non-manipulative eye on an inhumane monster, and has earned a place among the best films ever made in Japan. Still, the yakuza here emerges as a caring and understanding institution whose members do what they can to save Ishikawa—a man who instead has lost any moral compass and even kills his best friend, a yakuza, over an imaginary slight.

As Fukasaku's movies were instant hits in Japan and grossed millions, Tōei decided to turn *Battle Without Honour and Humanity* into a series. Five titles were released under the title *New Battles Without Honour and Humanity* between 1974 and 1976. By the series' end, the protagonist, Shōzō, has taken his place in the yakuza hierarchy. Any hint of parody is gone and the main theme now is the corruption of the political elite and the police. For instance, in *Yakuza Graveyard* (1976), a washed-up police officer befriends a yakuza and is harassed by his superiors. Despite facing a hard time at the office, he sticks with his blood brother against the corrupt hierarchy.

In the latter part of the 1970s, Fukasaku ventured into the realm of samurai films with *Shogun's Samurai* and *The Fall of the Ako Castle* (both 1978). He also directed *Message from Space* (1978), a forgettable Japanese version of *Star Wars*. Two years later, he directed another science fiction film, *Virus*, an unmemorable "entry in the disaster genre, with its farrago of subplots".⁴⁵ He continued to make films throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Film critic Mark Schilling described his 1999 *The Geisha House* (Tōei) as "an exploitation film that celebrates [...] the buying and selling of young virgin flesh".⁴⁶ Only with *Battle Royale* (2000), a grim tale of teenage violence, did Fukasaku regain a radical voice and shock the nation. Later

44. I am grateful to Eiko Maruko for suggesting this point.

45. McDonald, p. 29.

46. Schilling 1999, p. 290.

in his career, Fukasaku made several conventional movies that do not match the quality and depth of his earlier works.⁴⁷

The 1980s saw a general decline in the yakuza genre in Japan and most movies were released straight to video.⁴⁸ In 1994, Tōei announced that it was making its last yakuza movie, *The Man Who Killed the Don*. Though the movie flopped, the studio could still not quite give up a genre that had served the company so well for so many years. Tōei produced two more yakuza films: *Tale of Modern Chivalry* (1997) and *Zankyo* (1999). Both rework the classic yakuza film conventions. Set in the early decades of the twentieth century, they feature the predictable showdown between a virtuous yakuza and a posse of rival baddies. They both failed to make a profit.⁴⁹

The reasons for the thematic and stylistic involution, and the subsequent decline, of the yakuza genre cannot be addressed within the confines of film analysis. One needs to explore the political economy of the entertainment industry, from which the real yakuza was less than a step removed.

The Yakuza and the Entertainment Industry

The modern yakuza had taken an interest in the entertainment industry since at least the 1930s, when the Yamaguchi-gumi (founded in 1915) started sponsoring shows that featured prominent singers, storytellers, and sumo wrestlers through the organisation's "entertainment department". The boss of the group, Taoka Kazuo, also launched a talent agency that promoted Osaka-area performers.⁵⁰ In the 1950s, Kodama Yoshio, a right-wing political figure and a yakuza-group go-between, was thought to own a film company.⁵¹ The Yamaguchi-gumi entertainment department was formally abolished in 1960, but singers still perform regularly at parties celebrating the release of gangsters from prison, according to police.⁵² Gangsters also act as agents for major singing artists and musicians and as promoters of recitals at hotels and cabarets.

Studios, on the other hand, often have financial interests beyond the entertainment industry that might bring them into contact with organised crime. By the 1970s, Tōei had diversified into various sectors, such as theatres, hotels, real estate, construction and house decorating works. Both real estate and

47. Da Silva 2003.

48. See Schilling, M. (1996) 'Yakuza Films: fading celluloid heroes,' *Japan Quarterly*, vol. 43, no. 6, pp. 30-42. The only Tōei yakuza release that made a profit in the 1980s was *Gang Wives*, a series that started in 1986 and ended in 1997, in its tenth instalment. The equivalent of a yakuza *Desperate Housewives*, it is based on a book by a journalist who spent more than a year with real wives and girlfriends of yakuza gangsters. The women were portrayed as assertive and not averse to shedding blood, rather than passively obedient to the whims of their partners. The Tōei president was quick to declare: "It is all fantasy. There are no real women yakuza" (Schilling 1999, p. 15).

49. Schilling 1999, p. 16.

50. Kaplan & Dubro p. 75. As of 2005, the police estimate that the Yamaguchi-gumi has 39,200 members, accounting for 45 percent of the 87,000 gangsters in Japan. *Yomiuri Shimbun* 9 October 2005.

51. Kaplan & Dubro, p. 63.

52. *Asahi News Service* 30 December 1986.

construction are sectors heavily penetrated by the yakuza,⁵³ although no direct evidence of connection between Tōei economic activities and organised crime has surfaced in court.

Still, some producers at Tōei were rumoured to have close ties to the yakuza. Fukasaku himself recalls that a “big producer there named Shundō Kōji had been in the yakuza”.⁵⁴ Not only producers but also Tōei actors had come from the ranks of organised crime, most notably Andō Noburu. Born in 1925, Andō returned to Tokyo after spending the war training in the Japanese Navy “suicide attack” forces. He formed the Andō-gumi yakuza group at the age of 26. It had over 500 members at its zenith and was based in the Shibuya district of Tokyo. After serving a six-year prison sentence, he dissolved the Andō-gumi in 1958 and became an actor for Tōei. One clear sign of his past occupation is the large knife scar on his left cheek, the result of a brawl with a Korean gangster as a young man. According to Andō, acting came easily to him as a result of his underworld life: “In Japanese, the only difference between *yakuza* and *yakusha* (actor) is one hiragana character,” he told film critic Mark Schilling. “All yakuza have to be actors to survive.”⁵⁵ In 1965, he appeared in a film about himself, *Blood and Rules*. He later wrote, produced, and starred in another series of films about his life and his former gang, the Andō-gumi. The most important movie in this long series was released by Tōei in 1973 as *True Account of Andō Gang*. Based on Andō’s own autobiography, it was directed by none other than Satō Junya. Today, Andō is president of the film production company Andō Kikaku.⁵⁶

Fukasaku also had occasions to mingle with real gangsters. A chance encounter with yakuza in 1976 revealed to Fukasaku that they had watched and appreciated his 1975 *Graveyard of Honour*.⁵⁷ When asked by a journalist in 1997 how real-life yakuza felt about the movies he was making, Fukasaku shared a revealing anecdote set around 1973:

“There was the godfather of one gang who was portrayed in one of my films by Tanba Tetsurō. He wanted to check it out before it was released, so he set up a screening at Tōei. He came, sat there and watched the film. Afterwards he remarked that he was a little surprised that his subordinates, some of the men he’d brought with him, were so quiet during the film that they didn’t attempt any retaliation in response to what they were seeing on the screen. [*laughs*] That was a bit scary.”⁵⁸

53. See, for example, Hill, P. (2003) *The Japanese Mafia: Yakuza, Law and the State*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 96, 121-122; 139 and 185-191.

54. Desjardins p. 23.

55. *Japan Times* 17 April 2002.

56. Desjardins p. 23; Macias, pp. 114-125.

57. “After I made *Jingi no hakaba* [*Graveyard of Honour*, 1975], I started doing research for the follow-up *Yakuza no hakaba* [*Graveyard of Yakuza*]. [After a chance encounter with some yakuza in Osaka], they said: ‘Oh! You are the director! We just saw *Jingi no hakaba* and out of all your movies, that is a masterpiece!’ I was absolutely delighted to hear these compliments” (Macias, p. 154).

58. Desjardins p. 23. Tetsuro Tanba played the part of a yakuza boss in Fukasaku’s third instalment of the *Battles* series, titled *Battles Without Honor and Humanity: Proxy War* (1973).

Not only did bosses take a keen interest in their portrayal and demanded to pre-approve the content of movies; they also encouraged the production of hagiographies about themselves and their gangs. In 1973, the Yamaguchi-gumi had seen to it that a trilogy chronicling the life of its boss, Taoka Kazuo, was produced. *Yamaguchi-gumi San-daime* came out of the Tōei studio and was directed by Yamashita Kōsaku. Eleven years later, Tōei released the hagiography of the Inagawa-kai boss, *A Band of Daredevils*. Sugawara Bunta played the boss.⁵⁹

Although the evidence is somewhat scanty, it is safe to conclude that the yakuza had some control over the yakuza film genre throughout the post-war period. Within the heavily cartelised studio system of Japan, no other studio but Tōei was allowed to enter the yakuza genre.⁶⁰ In many ways, this situation appears to have presented the best of all possible worlds for a mafia intent in advertising itself, as it allowed for a degree of direct control over public image that most mafias never attain. Films such as *Donnie Brasco* (1997) do offer gripping personal tales of friendship and betrayal, for example, but ultimately show the mafia as losing out to the authorities.

There is a significant downside to a mafia's control of its own image: as the yakuza groups in Japan encouraged edifying depictions of themselves or their ancestors, they have managed to write a film genre into insignificance. These representations might have resonated with audiences before the war and in the early post-war period, but they clearly failed to do so with more sophisticated audiences from the 1960s onward. The brief window that opened at Tōei in the late 1960s and early 1970s allowed the yakuza to come across as a socially relevant institution and to be seen as a metaphor for other struggles, like those of students and workers. Despite the fictions involved in such a rendering, this allowed the yakuza to reap reputational benefits. Soon, however, the yakuza must have felt that things were getting out of hand and reasserted its control over the content of its cinematic image. In conclusion, artistic control should not be given to the mafia. Paradoxically, independent filmmakers such as Martin Scorsese, Abel Ferrara, and Mike Newell have done more to show the continued relevance of the Italian American mafia as a social phenomenon than the hired hands at Tōei have done for the yakuza.

Outside the Studio System

Engaging portrayals of the yakuza in the 1990s were produced outside the Japanese studio system by directors such as Kitano Takeshi, Miike Takashi and Sakamoto Junji.⁶¹ The movies of this new generation of filmmakers deal in extreme violence, deadpan wit, and deeply felt human dilemmas. They also

59. Sugawara told the *Japan Times* (2 April 2003): "I had yakuza friends. Not just Andō, but guys who were still gangsters. We used to go drinking together".

60. Shochiku made melodramas and Tōhō historical films (McDonald, p. 21).

61. By Takeshi Kitano, see *Violent Cop* (1989) and *Boiling Point* (1990). Sakamoto Junji filmed a remake of *Battles Without Honour and Humanity* titled *Another Battle* (2001).

portray the yakuza in a less than flattering light, although they do not totally eschew their genre roots: they do shy away from presenting the yakuza as downright buffoons.

It was only in May 1992 that a parody of the yakuza appeared in Japanese cinemas. *Anti-Extortion Woman* (also known as *Minbō: The Gentle Art of Japanese Extortion*), directed by Itami Jōzō, was produced by Itami's own company and distributed by Tōhō (the film was shown at the Venice Film Festival on 1 September 1992).⁶² The plot centres on a hotel where yakuza conduct their business (including the roughing up of their victims) in the lobby, thereby ruining the establishment's reputation. At first the hotel creates a task force in an effort to convince the yakuza to leave, offering them money and treating them with great respect. When this strategy does not work, the manager hires a female lawyer, played by Itami's wife, who uses strong words to boss the gangsters around until they are defeated. Along the way, the yakuza are made to look ridiculous and downright stupid—and hints at their dubious sexual dexterity are dropped at various points. As noted by Mark Schilling, the movie doubles as a "manual" for businesses on how to deal with the yakuza and it has a strong anti-organised crime message, making it an earnest, if not a terribly significant, exercise.⁶³ *A Taxing Woman* turned out to be the most successful yakuza movie in many years.⁶⁴

Itami's movie came out in a very different context than that of the early 1970s. The yakuza had finally started to be the target of official pressure and public disgust. With the end of the Cold War, the far left ceased to be such a primary security concern and authorities started to turn their attention to the mafia. Furthermore, Japan was under considerable pressure from the international community—especially the United States—to introduce anti-organised crime legislation. In 1989 the Prime Minister declared that Japan was joining the United States in its war against drugs and, in 1991, passed a landmark law against organised crime. The public had also been appalled by the high level of violence used in several turf wars between 1990 and 1992. Innocent bystanders, including a high school boy, were caught in the crossfire.⁶⁵

Still, Japan might not have changed as much as Itami had hoped. In May 1992, some thugs attacked him while he was entering his home in Tokyo and cut his face. Five members of the Gotō-gumi, a gang affiliated with the Yamaguchi-gumi, were arrested shortly thereafter.⁶⁶ Itami, who recovered, was not deterred and kept up his public campaign against the yakuza. After the release of his next movie, a rightist slashed the screen at a theatre and the distributor withdrew the movie

62. See Biennale di Venezia (1992) 49° *Mostra Internazionale d'Arte Cinematografica. Official Catalogue*, Edizioni Biennale-Fabbri Editori, Venice, pp. 152-155.

63. Schilling 1999, p. 258.

64. Kaplan & Dubro, p. 142. Interestingly, the only ironic take on the yakuza that was produced by the studio system (*Matabi—Wanderers*, 1973) appeared around the same time as Fukasaku's first gangster movies (Iwai McDonald 1992 p. 187). In any case, this satire was mild compared to Itami's 1992 movie.

65. See Hill pp. 137-176.

66. *The Los Angeles Times* 26 May 1992.

without pressing charges against the culprit. In an interview, Itami said: "If I were to make another film about gangs, it would not be impossible to find a distributor, but it would be difficult".⁶⁷ Under suspicious circumstances, Itami committed suicide in 1997 (*The Washington Post*, 16 Aug. 2002, writes: "conspiracy buffs believe that his death was somehow orchestrated by affronted yakuza members").

The fate of Itami suggests that there is only so much the yakuza will accept. Although depiction of the mafia in movies enhances the "brand", heavy-handed parody undermines what the mafia values most: its reputation for violence. Most damaging for the mafia is to be portrayed as comprised of weak buffoons of dubious sexual ability. Once a group is perceived as weak, it is forced to increase the use of violence rather than reduce it. If a mafia group ends up becoming a laughingstock, its most important asset is undermined.⁶⁸

In the above considerations we have referred to the mafia as a single entity. Mafias, however, are made up of different autonomous groups, such as the Gambino, Bonanno, Genovese, and Lucchese "families" in New York City and, among others, the Inagawa-kai, the Yamaguchi-gumi and the Sumiyoshi-kai in Japan. Even if a film undermines the collective reputation, which segment of the organisation will take upon itself the task of protecting the good name of the whole? Such a situation puts mafia "families" in a prisoners' dilemma, in which all would benefit from retaliation but each would rather have another "family" bear the burden of action. To the extent that retaliation does occur, it means that different mafia "families" agree to cooperate in the punishment. Alternatively, a single mafia group might take responsibility for protecting the reputation of all. The punishment against Itami occurred at a particularly timely juncture: the Yamaguchi-gumi, a group traditionally based in Kōbe, had just started to expand into Tokyo, a move resisted by local gangs affiliated with the Inagawa-kai. It is possible that the attack on Itami was (also) meant as a message to Tokyo-based groups, alerting them that it was now the Yamaguchi-gumi's job to protect the reputation of the organisation and punish public opponents *in Tokyo*. Although it was likely to elicit retaliation from the state, the brazen attack could have been aimed at telling other yakuza that the Yamaguchi-gumi was strong enough to withstand such an attack—another show of strength meant to send a signal to local competitors within the underworld.⁶⁹

A given "family" can instead decide to protect the film company and defect on its collective duty to punish those who badmouth the entire "outfit". This happened in the case of *Tano da Morire* (dir. Torre, 1997), a parody of the Sicilian mafia that did not elicit a violent response from the real mafia. Although the

67. Schilling 1999, p. 83.

68. This consideration follows from Gambetta's theory. I am grateful to Diego Gambetta for a helpful conversation on this point.

69. This conjecture is further supported by the fact that Itami was not the only member of the public to become a victim of the Yamaguchi-gumi in Tokyo in the early 1990s. In August 1990, journalist Atsushi Mizoguchi was also attacked (*The Los Angeles Times* 26 May 1992).

movie was made with the best intentions of lampooning Cosa Nostra, it has surfaced that the production company paid off a Palermo "family" in order to obtain permission to shoot.⁷⁰ This might have saved the filmmakers from retaliation from the other mafia groups who felt they had been offended.

Conclusion

Japan serves as a significant case study of how much latitude the mafia allows artists, as the yakuza has influenced the production and content of studio gangster films quite possibly for a long time. As admitted by Fukasaku, bosses arranged private screenings at one of the top studios in the country, and former gangsters worked as producers and actors. The main argument of this paper is that such a control led to the unintended collapse of the genre: the mafia promoted self-images that did not have enough cinematic merit to make a significant dent in the history of cinema and to connect with other segments of society and sophisticated movie audiences. Mobsters have not yet entered the cinematic age of the anti-hero. As is the case in other countries, mafia penetration of a given sector of the economy led to a less than optimal outcome for the industry, although for very special reasons.

There was a time in the history of the genre when talented directors, such as Satō and Fukasaku, were able to smuggle their artistic vision into the studio system. The consequence was that some masterpieces in the gangster genre were produced in Japan and, for a moment, they connected with significant portions of the audience, and were as important stylistically as their American counterparts. After this brief window of opportunity, the studios reasserted their control on the style and content of yakuza movies, thereby (metaphorically) killing this genre.

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70. Reportedly, production company ASP gave 30 million lire to Marcello Fava and Giuseppe Arena, two local Mafiosi later turned state witnesses. The producer denied the fact. *Corriere della Sera* 1 July 1998.

Filmography: Directors and Films

Fukasaku, Kinji:

- 1962 *The Proud Challenge* (*Hokori Takaki Chōsen*)
1972 *Under the Fluttering Military Flag* (*Gunki Hatameku Moto ni*)
1972 *Street Mobster* (*Gendai Yakuza—Hitokiri Yota*)
1973 *Battle Without Honour and Humanity* (*Jinginaki Tatakai*)
1973 *Battles Without Honor and Humanity: Agent of War* (*Jinginaki Tatakai—Dairi Senso*)
1975 *Graveyard of Honour* (*Jingi no Hakaba*)
1974-1976 *New Battles Without Honour and Humanity* (*Shin Jinginaki Tatakai*)
1976 *Yakuza Graveyard—Jasmine Flowers* (*Yakuza no Hakaba—Kuchinashi no Hana*)
1978 *The Shogun's Samurai* (*Yagyū Ichizoku no Inbō*)
1978 *Message from Space* (*Uchū Kara no Messēji*)
1978 *The Fall of the Ako Castle* (*Akō Danzetsu*)
1999 *The Geisha House* (*Omocha*)
2000 *Battle Royale*

Furuhata, Michio:

- 1997 *Tale of Modern Chivalry* (*Gendai Ninkyō Den*)

Itami, Jūzō:

- 1992 *Anti-Extortion Woman* (*Minbō no Onna*)

Katō, Tai:

- 1966 *Tokijiro of Kutsukake* (*Kutsukake Tokijirō - yūkyō ippiki*)

Kitano, Takeshi:

- 1989 *Violent Cop* (*Sono otoko, kyobo ni tsuki*)
1990 *Boiling Point* (*San tai yon x jugatsu*)

Yamashita, Kōsaku:

- 1973 *Yamaguchi-gumi San-daime*
1985 *A Band of Daredevils* (*Shura no Mure*)

Makino, Masahiro:

- 1966 *Bloody Festival at Kanda* (*Kettō Kanda matsuri*)

Miike, Takashi:

- 1997 *Full Metal Yakuza* (*Full Metal gokudō*)
1997 *Rainy Dog* (*Gokudō kuroshakai*)

Newell, Mike:

1997 *Donnie Brasco*

Ogawa, Shinsuke:

1968 *Summer in Narita (Nihon Kaihō sensen: Sanrizuka no natsu)*

1971 *Narita: The Peasants of the Second Fortress (Sanrizuka: Dainitoride no hitobito)*

1973 *Heta Village (Sanrizuka: Heta buraku)*

Pollack, Sidney:

1975 *The Yakuza*

Rosi, Francesco:

1961 *Salvatore Giuliano*

Sadao, Nakajima:

1994 *The Man Who Killed the Don (Don o Totta Otoko)*

Sakamoto, Junji:

2000 *Another Battle (Shin jinginaki tatakai)*

Satō, Junya:

1963 *Story of Military Cruelty (Rikugun Zangyaku Monogatari)*

1967 *Organised Crime 1 (Soshiki Bōryoku)*

1967 *Organised Crime 2 (Zoku Soshiki Bōryoku)*

1969 *Organised Crime 3—Loyalty Offering Brothers (Soshiki Bōryoku—Kyōdai Sakazuki)*

1971 *Violent Gang Rearms (Bōryokudan Sai Busō)*

1973 *True Account of Ando Gang—Story of Attack (Jitsuroku Andō—Shūgeki Hen)*

Scorsese, Martin:

1973 *Mean Streets*

1976 *Taxi Driver*

1990 *Goodfellas*

1995 *Casino*

Sekimoto, Ikuo:

1999 *Remains of Chivalry (Zankyō)*

Shigeaki, Hidaka:

1956 *In the Town of Pathos, the Fog Falls* (*Aishū no machi ni kiri ga furu*)

Torre, Roberta:

1997 *Tano da Morire*

Yuasa, Yoshio:

1965 *Blood and Rules* (*Chi to Okite*)